

ByWard Market BIA Executive Director

From: ByWard Market BIA Executive Director
Sent: February 11, 2022 1:27 PM
To: Cenatus, Ashley (Fortier, Mona - Députée)
Cc: Ashley Hopkins
Subject: Continued information to support federal relief for downtown businesses

Hi Ashley,

Writing today with more stories of how crucial the need for federal funding is. Since our letter of Wednesday, February 9, 2022, the tenor in the ByWard Market has become even more despondent. Daily, I am getting stories of fear and desperation. We have businesses on the brink of collapse, and their employees who have gone half of the month without work or wages. ***The situation facing many in the ByWard Market is as dire as March 2020 prior to the launching of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.***

In the ByWard Market, I have heard from some that were deemed essential businesses, and thus open through the latest provincial public health restrictions, but their business was reduced to 25% of their normal volume, barely enough for rent.

We are being inundated with messages of panic asking what relief is available, where can it be found, and when can it be accessed. For a short month, we're nearly halfway through and there's little hope that businesses and their employees will make enough to pay basic bills. Further, many retailers were hoping for a successful Valentine's Day to boost their sales and are now seeing another opportunity for sales evaporate.

We have businesses who through this unofficial lockdown have seen a reduction in their business by 80%. We have service providers that have effectively been closed due to traffic considerations and clients unsure if they can make their appointments.

We have some buildings that have also closed, like the Rideau Centre, leaving their internal businesses without an exterior door closed for 12 days. They are desperate for revenue.

And we have those that have seen a precipitous decline in traffic as many residents are heeding the direction of the police to "avoid the downtown core."

Businesses are scared, uncertain, and losing patience. They were already in tough economic times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are now uncertain of how they sustain themselves to the next quarter, let alone beyond. This is disrupting businesses, families, and the entire community.

Again, I can't stress enough how much a grant-based funding mechanism is needed for the businesses and employees of affected districts including the ByWard Market and that it is needed now. We are quickly running out of time to ensure that the people who sustain our wonderful downtown core can make it through this latest crisis.

Sincerely,

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Kalin McCluskey
Executive Director | Directrice générale
ByWard Market Business Improvement Area (BIA)
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